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ABSTRACT

This report describes the process by which participating agencies in the Interagency Panel on Early Childhood Research and Development establish priorities, translate these priorities into research activities, and utilize these research findings in further policy decisions and research planning. The process is discussed under the following categories: the planning phase, the funding phase, the research implementation phase, and the reporting, dissemination and feedback phase. Also reported are influential internal and external factors such as the official agency objectives, the structure of the agency, or the major emphasis of research of the agency: basic, applied, evaluative, etc. Helpful charts are included along with specific agency suggestions on how the Interagency Panel can promote the broader dissemination and use of research findings in making policy decisions. (CS)

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AN ANALYSIS

OF

THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING AND UTILIZING RESEARCH PRIORITIES

In Federally Funded Early Childhood Research and Development

Prepared for the Interagency Panel

on Early Childhood Research and Development

by

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Washington, D.C.

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Participating Agencies

Department of Health, Education and Welfare

- Office of Child Development (OCD)
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
- Maternal and Child Health Service (MCHS)
- Community Services Administration (CSA - SRS)
- Office of Education (OE)
  - National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD)
  - Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH)
  - Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, Follow Through Program (BESE)
  - Bureau of Educational Personnel Development, Early Childhood Training Program (BEPD)
- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (OASPE)

Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)

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Purpose

In response to the request from the Interagency Panel on Early Childhood Research and Development, a series of interviews were scheduled to elicit information on the process by which participating agencies establish research priorities, translate these priorities into research activities, and how the research findings are utilized in further policy decisions and research planning.

Method

Interviews with key staff were arranged and conducted in person or by telephone. The interview guide used is in Appendix A. In addition, printed brochures and written documents provided by the staff of the agencies* were utilized to augment the interview information. The information obtained by these two methods has been compiled and analyzed. Reported here is a synthesis of these data.

Overview

Analysis of the data indicates that the Research and Development (R & D) process is divided into four interrelated phases:

1. The planning phase, which begins with
   - the legislative authorization,
   - the official agency objectives,

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*See Glossary for definition of the term "Agency" as used in this paper (pp. 25-26).

- the communication system of the agency,
- the process of establishing long and short term priorities,
- the scope of funding of the particular agency,
- and the allocation of funds among priorities.

2. The funding phase which includes
   - the methods by which research proposals are obtained,
   - the methods by which proposals are funded, including
     - the predominant funding mechanisms utilized by the agency,
     - and the review system of the agency.
3. The research implementation phase includes
   - the implementation of the research activity,
   - and the monitoring of the activity.
4. The reporting, dissemination and feedback stage includes
   - methods of reporting to the funding agency,
   - method of disseminating information by the researcher to the R & D community and programs operations,
   - and utilization of findings by the agency and the R & D community in further priority setting.

Findings

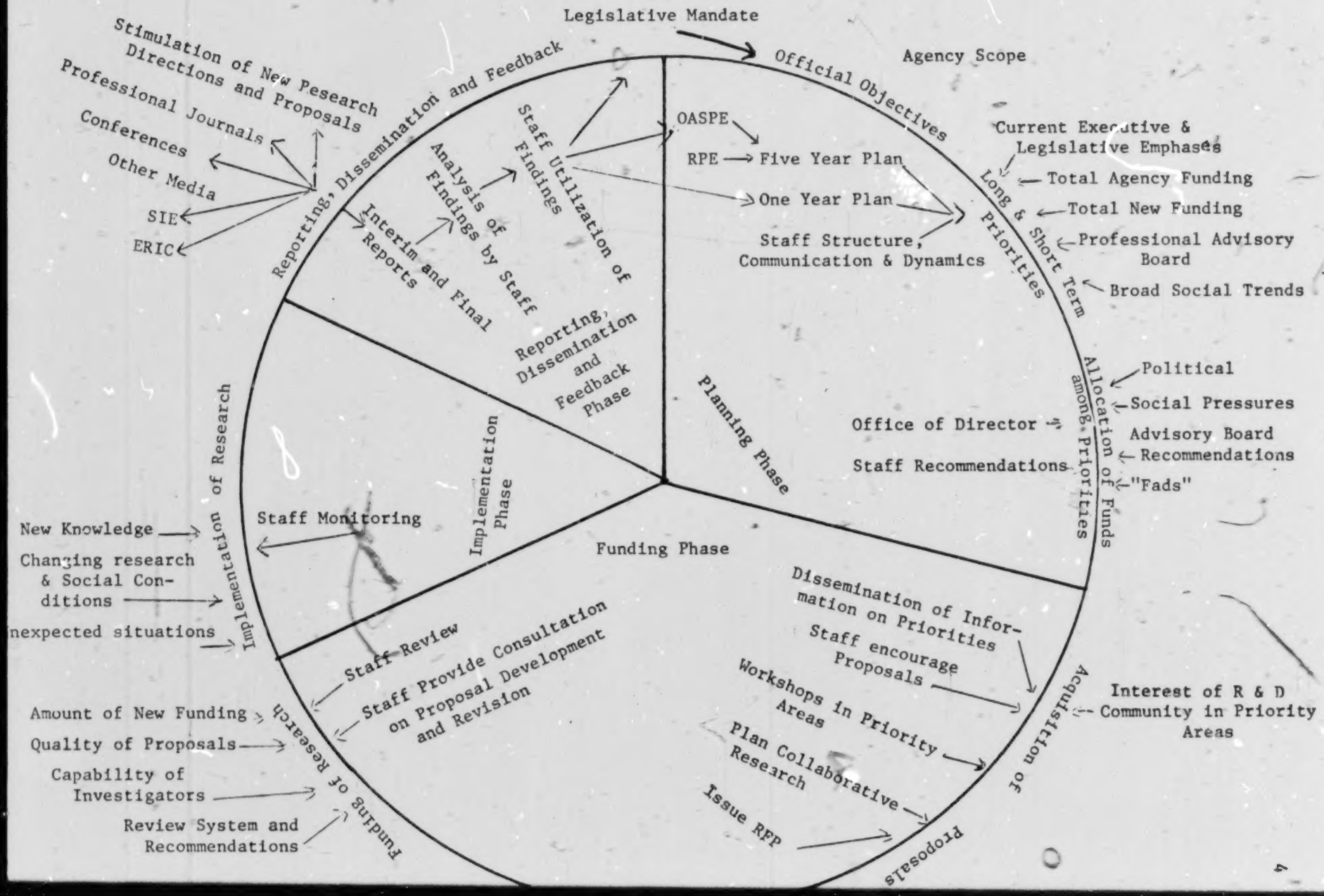
In order to understand the various formal and informal means of establishing R & D priorities, translating these priorities into agency research activities, and utilizing findings in feedback for further priority setting, it is necessary to describe each stage of the planning, funding, implementation and feedback cycle of the funding agency. This cycle varies widely among the agencies, and these variations as well as the common elements in the cycle are discussed below. The common elements are presented in Chart I on page 4. The process by which research activities are planned, developed, and findings utilized is affected at each stage by numerous factors within the agency referred to as "internal" influences. In addition, many external factors affect and are affected by the R & D cycle at all four stages as shown on Chart I.

The Planning Phase

All agencies report having "official" objectives which regulate research priorities relating to young children. These objectives stem from legislative mandates as well as long term policy decisions. The objectives vary with the area of concern of the agency: education, mental health, child health and human development, etc. They also vary in terms of the target population: retarded, low-income, maternal and infant care, handicapped children, etc. In addition, objectives vary with the research emphasis of the agency: basic, applied, evaluative, etc. In several cases, the type of research funded is regulated by legislative mandate. For a description of "official" objectives see the paper: "Broad Agency Goals and Agency Research

CHART I

RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION CYCLE OF AGENCIES : INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES



Objectives for FY '72."

Most agencies report that they have written five year plans describing their research priorities. These five year plans are revised and updated each fiscal year. Revisions are made on the basis of many external factors including: new research findings, changes in Congressional and Executive emphases, and high level task forces such as the White House Conference on Children and Youth. Examples of revisions of existing five year plans made recently are the emphasis on day care research resulting from social trends as well as Congressional interest, and the emphasis on advocacy, resulting primarily from the White House Conference. Social trends such as a rising unemployment rate or new interest in welfare reform also were reported to influence short term priority setting. The total amount of funding and the amount of new funding are reflected in priorities.

Agencies vary in the ways that they make information about long and short term priorities available to early childhood research and development staff of their own agencies. Written five year plans are generally made available to department chiefs. However, most information about changes in research priorities or new research priorities are communicated through conferences and staff meetings. Described as the "filteration" system, staff meetings are held at various levels starting with the agency director, department chief, and then other key staff, and priorities are described and discussed. One agency reported that Executive directives were a major source of information regulating staff priorities.

Selection of one year priorities are influenced by various internal factors including the structure of the staff, its pattern of communication and group dynamics, as well as by the particular interests of key staff

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members and the director. Five different methods of establishing annual research priorities were described. These five methods vary as to the amount of input from the agency director, from the R & D staff of the agency, from agency program staff, and from external sources, including field staff and professionals in the R & D community. The five processes reported for establishing R & D priorities are:

1. Key R & D staff spend a period of time conferring with program staff on present status and future needs of the agency. Department chiefs then meet individually with the Agency director to report on recent findings, gaps and needs in their research areas. Written estimates of the amount of funding necessary to fulfill needs are usually submitted at this time. The director meets in turn with each department head and draws up a set of overall priorities for the agency and allocates funds among the priorities.

   This method allows for R & D staff input while still vesting decision-making power in the director. While the decision of the director is not affected by dynamics of a group, it is subject to the possibility that some persuasive department chiefs may make a more impressive case for their department needs than less persuasive staff.

5. Key R & D staff meet as a group with the director; each chief reports on department needs for the coming year, and the group reaches a consensus on priorities and a tentative allocation of funds among these priorities.

   This method allows for maximum communication and understanding of research status and needs between departments within the agency. It is subject to influences of group dynamics.

3. Key R & D staff together with program staff and Associate Regional Directors meet as a group with the director, discuss agency objectives, current R & D status, and try to identify gaps. Recommendations for future research priorities are made on the basis of group consensus.

   This method allows for input between program staff on both the federal and regional level, and maximum communication between departments within the agency. Decisions are subject to group dynamics as well as to social pressures (sometimes transient) from the field.

4. Key R & D staff meet with program people in the field as well as with consultants. A task force with numerous subcommittees is formed. Each subcommittee makes a report on the priorities for its area. The recommended package of priorities is reviewed by the agency director and may be revised or reordered.

   This method allows for considerable input from both staff and the professional community while still maintaining considerable control over priorities in the office of the director.

5. In the final method reported, recommendations for priorities are made by a professional advisory council for the institute as a whole at a meeting attended by the institute director.

   Together with the method by which these agencies review and fund research proposals, this method allows for a maximum input by top level professionals from the R & D community. As will be discussed later, staff make their inputs in a later stage of the R & D cycle, which then affects how priorities are implemented.

In addition to the process by which annual priorities are established, priority setting is affected by a variety of other influences from inside the federal government or inside the agency. Most agencies reported that they had changed priorities, or shifted emphases among their priorities in the last year in response to directives from OASPE, from their own planning units, or from the institute director.

Annual priorities are also influenced by the amount of funding available. Staff interviewed reported that at various times in the past when they had sufficient allocations of funds to award grants to all or almost all of approved proposals, their priorities were more broadly defined and encompassed the whole range of agency objectives. On the other hand, when agency funds are more limited and the agency can fund only a small proportion of its approved proposals, priorities are necessarily more narrowly defined.

Agencies also varied in the percentage of unallocated funds they reserve for funding of unsolicited proposals described as "creative, innovative, or brilliant." Three agencies reported that they reserved about 10% of annual funding for such potential "break-through" proposals, but expressed the wish that they could reserve a larger percentage of funds from the priority allocation system.

Priority setting within agencies also varies with the scope of funding. The various agencies have different proportions of their annual funding allocated to support of projects, programs, and centers.* Agencies which have a major portion of their funding at the project level are most subject

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*See Glossary for definition of these terms as used in this paper (pp. 25-26).

to annual shifts in priorities. This may be true whether the agency establishes priorities through one of the staff decision-making processes or through an external advisory board. Agencies which have a large proportion of their funds at the program level have made a longer range commitment to special research areas. Within these broad program areas, priorities may still be reordered on the basis of new findings or new agency directions. Agencies which have a large proportion of their funding at the center level have made large scale, long term commitments to investigating major research questions, and are least subject to annual shifts in priority setting. That is not to say that agencies funding centers cannot reorder priorities, but such shifts are generally within broad priority areas, since centers are funded to research specific questions such as mental retardation, metabolic research, vocational education, etc.

The Funding Phase

As the R & D cycle moves from the planning to the funding phase, the degree of influence that staff exert on the research activity of the agency differs among the various agencies. These differences are related to the manner in which proposals are obtained, the major emphases of research sponsored by the agency: basic, applied or evaluative, the funding mechanisms utilized by the agency, and the review system of the agency.

The manner in which an agency receives proposals is related to the traditional funding pattern of the agency as well as to the type of research sponsored, and to the ways in which information about priority is disseminated. Agencies which have funded basic research for many years

report that most of the proposals they receive are unsolicited. Agencies which make a large proportion of their research grants to targeted areas generally know about, and may give consultation to R & D proposal developers. The number of proposals, and possibly the quality of proposals received by an agency, is partially related to how widely information about agency priorities is disseminated. Several agencies reported that annual priority lists were circulated in-house, but not outside of the agency. At the other extreme, one agency reported that the annual priority list is circulated throughout government, mailed to previous grantees, and even published in professional journals.

Staff can influence research proposals in a number of other ways. Most agencies report that their R & D staff go to professional meetings and discuss agency needs with potential applicants from the R & D community. Several agencies report that agency staff visit current and potential researchers at universities or other research centers to discuss research needs and encourage submission of proposals in gap areas. These agencies also report that they provide extensive consultation to applicants in development of proposals prior to and after submission. Other agencies report that they hold special topic workshops for interested, competent professionals to feed back information about current findings in specified areas and to stimulate further research proposals in these identified areas. These are some of the informal ways reported by which agency staff could exert influence on the type of research proposal submitted as an "unsolicited proposal."

When an agency devotes a large percentage of its research budget to the mechanisms of targeted grants, special grants, and contracts, greater staff influence is exerted on the research activity of the agency. Nearly

all agencies reported that they utilize these mechanisms at certain times. In these cases proposals or bids are submitted in areas of research defined by the agency. In the case of special grants, agency staff may collaborate on the development of the proposal and the implementation of the project. In the case of contracts, specifications are written by staff, and contracts awarded to carry out those specifications. The funding mechanism utilized by the agency is related to overall agency objectives and philosophy. Agencies which see themselves as a vehicle for support of highly competent professionals in the R & D community make a large proportion of their grants through the "unsolicited proposal" mechanism. Those agencies which have clearly defined agency objectives, and see the R & D community as a mechanism by which the agency can achieve its research objectives are more apt to utilize the targeted grant, special grant and contract mechanism.

In the initial part of the funding cycle, the major external influence on the R & D activities of the agencies is the interest of the R & D community in agency objectives which affects the number, quality and variety of proposals that are submitted.

Later in the funding cycle, the selection of research to be funded, the amount of direction and control by the agency on this selection depends in large part on the review system of the agency.

As reported by the key staff interviewed, the agencies engaged in research and development in early childhood research utilize one of four types of review systems:

Staff Review — In this method proposals are reviewed and voted on by staff committees. Some agencies report that they have standing staff committees to review proposals in specific areas. All who use this method reported

that at times they developed ad hoc staff committees to review proposals. Some agencies augment these staff committees by appointment of professionals from other agencies or outside professionals.

Mail Review — In this system, proposals are mailed to professionals who have expertise in the research area covered by the proposal. Written reviews of the proposals are returned to the agency, and the staff utilize the recommendations in funding research proposals.

Single Panel Review — In this system, proposals are reviewed by a committee of professionals from outside of the agency. These committees may be appointed for a specified term of office, or may be appointed on an ad hoc basis.

Dual Panel Review — In this system, proposals are reviewed by a two tiered system of professionals from outside of the agency. Members of the first panel, referred to in some agencies as the "study section," are nominated by the agency. Except in cases of interdisciplinary research, study section members have professional expertise in the research area of the agency. Study section members review all proposals submitted to them, and vote to approve, defer, or disapprove the proposals. Those approved are rated independently by

members of the study section and the ratings averaged. All approved proposals are transmitted to the second panel by an agency staff member called the Executive Secretary. The second panel of distinguished scientists reviews packages of proposals from the entire organization and takes action on all proposals.

These different review systems reflect different agency philosophies and purposes and allow staff to have different amounts of influence on the total research activity of the agency. Greatest agency influence on agency research is maintained when proposals are reviewed and funded by the staff itself. Considerable agency direction is exerted when a mail review is used and final project selection is made by staff. Least control of agency research is maintained when single or dual panels of outside professionals decide on the agency's research.

However, staff of agencies using the single and dual panel review systems of outside professionals report that there are subtle and informal ways in which staff can influence the research activity of the agency. As discussed previously, agency staff can utilize a variety of methods to stimulate "unsolicited proposals." Staff also provide consultation in developing proposals for submission in areas of particular interest to the agency. If a proposal is rejected or given a low rank by the first panel or study section and the agency is very interested in the research area, staff may ask for a deferral by the second panel, and assist the principal investigator in rewriting the proposal for resubmission at a later date. Finally, staff can have an influence on the direction of agency research through nomination of outside professionals to the first panel or study section. Careful selection and

nomination of committee members with professional interest in areas of major concern to the agency can increase the likelihood that proposals in the area of agency concern will be approved.

After research has been selected for funding through the particular review system utilized by the agency, staff can again influence the total package of R & D activity funded by the agency by negotiating the amount of funding on some or all approved grants. If staff can persuade the principal investigators to reduce proposed costs by 10%, for example, then the agency can fund additional research proposals. Since most agencies report that more proposals are approved than they have funds to support, by careful negotiation, staff can increase the number of funded proposals and even broaden the range of priorities addressed.

The Implementation Phase

As the R & D activity of federal agencies moves into the third phase, implementation of research, the degree of influence agencies exert ranges from little other than fiscal monitoring to nearly complete control. Again, influence is highest in research implementation in agencies which use a high proportion of their research funds for special grants, collaborative studies, and contracts. In such research activities, staff maintain a monitoring function, sometimes on almost a daily basis. Staff report least influence in the implementation of basic research funded through centers or individual projects, and particularly when basic research is funded on a long term basis.

External influences reported in the implementation stage of research activity include the influence on the researcher of new knowledge and developments of which the researcher becomes aware and which alter or change the

course of the research. In addition, changes in either research conditions or general social conditions may have impact on how research grants are implemented.

The relationships between various aspects of the research and demonstration activities of the federal agencies interviewed and the degree of external and internal influence on these research activities is shown on Chart II on page 16. It should be noted that no agency interviewed was entirely within one category. However, the chart does illustrate some major differences among agencies which influence priority setting, research funding and implementation as well as the utilization of research findings in further program planning.

The Reporting, Dissemination and Feedback Phase

After research is completed and reports written, the flow of information and influence changes direction. Now it is the researcher who exerts influence both back into the funding agency and out into the R & D community.

Every agency stated that they required and received interim and final reports from their researchers, but the information included in these reports and the way in which the agencies deal with this information varies. Some agencies reported that the findings of research funded were included in great detail in the final report of the investigator, and that the agency had up to six months to publish or otherwise disseminate the information before the principal investigator could publish. In other agencies, almost reverse conditions applied. In these, the final report might or might not include full reports of findings; however, the principal investigator has six months after termination of the grant in which to publish before the agency can make

CHART II

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOME ASPECTS OF RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES AND SOURCE OF INFLUENCE*

	High Internal Influence Low External Influence	Equal External and Internal Influence	Low Internal Influence High External Influence
Predominant Emphasis of Research	Applied and Evaluative	Applied and Evaluative	Basic
Scope of Funding	Projects and Programs	Projects and Programs	Projects and Centers
High Percent of Funds Allocated to	Special Grants Targeted Grants Contracts	Targeted Grants	Formula Grants Block Grants Unsolicited Proposals
Review System	Staff Review	Mail Review	Single or Dual Panel Review by outside professionals
Publication Rights	Within agency for 6 months after termination of grant	With Researcher for 6 months after termination of grant	With Researcher for 6 months after termination
Utilization of Research Findings Within Agency	Staff use analytic techniques, state of the art to help identify gaps for future research	Staff use project officer reports of research findings	Staff rely on verbal reports of research findings at in-house conferences
Priority Setting	By R & D staff, in consultation with program staff	By R & D staff, in consultation with program staff, field staff and outside consultants	By advisory board and Review panel

*It should be noted that no agency interviewed fitted these categories in every aspect described.

findings available. Again, this reflects a difference in agency philosophy. In the first situation, research findings are presumed to be the property of the agency. In the second, research findings are considered the property of the investigator.

To some extent, this difference in agency philosophy affects the methods of disseminating information back to the R & D community. However, there was less variation reported in how findings are disseminated than in any other aspect of the R & D cycle. All agencies reported that research findings were published in professional journals, at professional conferences, as well as in publications of a less technical nature and often disseminated through other media of the investigator's choice. Most agencies which give prior publication rights to researchers require that the method for dissemination of findings be described in the research proposal. Those agencies which retain initial publication rights did not report that they made this requirement of their researchers. All agencies reported that they supplied information to the SIE information system and nearly all reported that they sent final reports to the ERIC system. Both the NIH and the NIMH information systems are used by some agencies. Three agencies mentioned that they published annotated bibliographies which are updated regularly.

A variety of other dissemination methods were mentioned. One agency has funded a special demonstration project to send resource people out into the field to visit service program personnel on a one-to-one basis to keep them informed of new research findings. Four other agencies reported that they disseminated new research findings by planning special conferences in special topic areas and holding these in various regions. Some agencies publish the proceedings of these conferences to make the information more

widely available. Two agencies report that they have a special staff devoted to developing new methods for dissemination of information, and other agencies reported that they make dissemination grants.

There is more variation between the agencies in how they utilize research findings internally than in how they are disseminate externally. In three agencies, interim reports are summarized by the project officer, and the data made available to key staff involved in program planning. In another, there is a special analysis section of the agency which considers research findings and makes recommendations for utilization of research findings is less formal and depends upon verbal reports of project officers to key planning staff. Most agencies reported holding in-house, departmental conferences and sometimes inter-agency conferences in particular research areas. At these conferences recent findings are reviewed and future plans discussed. Two agencies reported that they had task forces to study and report on the utilization of research for planning in special areas. One agency has contracted to have every final report abstracted. In addition project officers attempt to flag important findings for consideration by program and R & D staff.

Though different agencies reported different methods by which research findings are utilized within the agency to make further policy decisions, all reported <u>some</u> internal feedback system. All reported that findings from research studies were considered by staff in reassessing and refining agency priorities. However, many who were interviewed wondered to what extent these findings were considered in making policy decisions at other levels of government.

Every agency interviewed indicated that their staff were aware of the

need to develop better methods to disseminate and utilize research findings. Spontaneously, more than half of those interviewed mentioned the time lag between research findings and their implementation into future programs. Interest was expressed in learning of innovative dissemination methods being employed by other agencies. The list of recommendations made of ways in which the Interagency Panel can promote the broader dissemination of research findings is in Appendix B.

Summary and Conclusions

The members of the Interagency Panel on Early Childhood Research and Development reported a wide variety of processes by which research priorities are established. Various internal and external factors influence these processes at all stages of the R & D cycle: planning, funding, implementation, and dissemination. Among these factors are the official agency objectives stemming from its legislative mandate, the structure of the agency, the major emphasis on research of the agency: basic, applied, evaluative, etc. In addition, the process of establishing priorities is also influenced by the predominant funding mechanisms utilized by the agency, the review system through which proposals are approved as well as the internal communication system for utilizing research findings in future program planning.

Though there were wide differences found in both the extent and the processes by which agencies established their priorities, it was found that all agencies do engage in some process of establishing and assessing their priorities at every stage of the R & D cycle. Further, all agencies have

an established system for reporting and utilizing research findings in refining their priorities and making future program plans. All agencies also reported, however, that their long and short term research priorities were also influenced by factors outside of their control: directives from other federal sources as well as changing social needs and pressures.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERAGENCY PANEL

Selection of Research Priorities

Note: The procedures of concern here are those pertaining to specification of the substance or content of research and not with routine grant or project approval or funding procedures.

1. Does your department or agency have "official" objectives regulating research priorities relating to young children? General, on-going or short range, specific? For FY '72, FY '73?

2. Does your department or agency have official or understood research priorities related to young children? General, on-going or short range, specific? For FY '72 or FY '73?

3. What sources of information are available to early childhood research and development staff about departmental or agency long-range plans and priorities?

4. Is there a formal process for establishing agency or Bureau early childhood research and development priorities? What analytic techniques are used in generating research and development priorities?

5. What are the other influences on the selection of research priorities, if any?

6. What are the formal and informal means for coordinating agency objectives and early childhood research and development priorities?

7. What are the formal and informal means for translating early childhood research priorities into agency research and development programs and projects? (How is research content determined? When does the procedure start? Where--at what level? Who makes the initial recommendation about where to put research money?)

8. Does the agency fund on-going programs, which are not necessarily related to research priorities?

9. After the substance of programs and projects is determined, what elements are considered in the distribution of funding?

Dissemination of Research Findings

10. What means are used in your agency to provide for the utilization of research findings in ways to influence planning processes and policy decisions?

    Agency apparatus and methods

        Formal

        Informal

    Other means--journal articles
                reports
                conferences
                task forces
                other

11. What information is made available to researchers about early childhood research and development priorities?

    By what procedures?

12. What means are used to disseminate information to other government agencies, about on-going grants and projects?

13. What are your recommendations for ways the Interagency Panel can promote the broader dissemination of research findings and particularly the use of findings in the making of policy decisions?

APPENDIX B

Responses to the question: *"What are your recommendations for ways the Interagency Panel can promote the broader dissemination of research findings and particularly the use of findings in the making of policy decisions?"*

1. Require each grantee to include a research utilization component in their final application and a policy implications section.

2. Develop dissemination demonstrations.

3. Support interdepartmental projects on the utilization of knowledge at universities.

4. Support more "state of the art" volumes with contributions from many researchers at frequent intervals.

5. Provide reports with factual and substantive information (not state of the art) on early childhood research. Include government funded as well as research being funded by universities, foundations and other private sources.

6. Distribute documents prepared for the Interagency Panel outside of government.

7. Send representatives of the Interagency Panel to professional meetings to describe work of the Panel and provide information on current research.

8. Experiment with presenting significant research findings in publications geared to program operators.

9. Experiment with multimedia to disseminate research findings.

10. Make more use of the Externship approach. When there is a good demonstration, have key people spend a week there and other program people spend three months.

11. Federal funds should support programs on a regional basis which focus on utilization of knowledge. Greater technical assistance should be provided to regional and local levels.

12. Reporting of research findings within the federal government should be improved including sending brief reports to the Secretary highlighting important findings and practical implications.

13. Research findings might be provided the planning, program, and budget offices within the agency.

14. The Interagency Panel might assume a responsibility for providing information to decision makers at a time when decisions are in the process of being made.

15. In addition, more detailed reports of the same nature should be distributed to operating agencies, Congressional offices, regional and state offices.

16. Disseminate information which casts doubts on previous findings, or amplifies existing findings to forewarn makers of policy that much data are too fragile to use in large scale applied programs. Along with findings, qualifications should be disseminated to convey that it is necessary to recreate the total situation to get the same results.

17. Research findings should not be oversold. They should be disseminated in such a way that policy decisions will become more cautious and more competent.

18. Make the information in the Interagency computer available to members of the Panel and to others in the field. Provide on line service.

19. Store results from early childhood studies in the Interagency computer system. Have immediate on line access available to planning, program and budget offices.

GLOSSARY

AGENCY: The term agency is used to refer to the individual units participating on the Interagency Panel on Early Childhood Research and Development. The term includes three "offices" (OASPE, OCD and OEO). It does not include the Office of Education, but does include three bureaus of the Office of Education: BEH, BESE, BEDP. Agency is also used to refer to two Centers within NIMH: Behavioral Sciences Research Branch and the Center for Studies of Child and Family Mental Health. The term also is used in reference to one Institute: NICHD, as well as to MCHS and to SRS/CSA.

DEPARTMENT: is used to refer to a subdivision of an agency.

PROJECTS: The smallest unit of funding is called a project and includes a clearly defined project or small group of closely related research activities. Projects includes funds for conferences, publications, and training programs as well as research and demonstration.

PROGRAMS: Programs refer to funding to larger scale, broad-based, generally long range research of several projects in an area of special interest to the funding agency. Examples of programs are Follow-through and Planned Variations.

CENTERS: Large scale, generally long term funding of research institutes within, or outside of universities or school systems, in which several projects in a particular area, often of an interdisciplinary nature, are conducted. Examples of Center funding are the Mental Retardation Centers of NICHD and the regional educational laboratories of OE.

UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS: Proposals submitted to a funding agency in the area of interest of the Principal Investigator, and not in response to a notification of interest by an agency. These proposals are usually submitted without prior knowledge of, or encouragement by staff.

FORMULA GRANTS: Allocation of lump sums of funds to States, Local units, School systems, etc., on the basis of some predetermined criteria such as, number of low income children, number of preschool children, population of the county.

TARGETED GRANTS: Grants made on proposals obtained after agency priorities have been circulated. Contact with prospective investigators may be made informally, through telephone or personal contact with staff, or publication of research priorities in professional journals.

CONTRACTS: Specifications for research are established within the agency, an RFP issued, and contract awarded on the basis of bids.

SPECIAL GRANTS: These grants are initiated by staff of the funding agency to meet the special needs of development in areas lacking in adequate research activity, and in which the agency has a direct interest. Staff maintain control and supervision of research at all stages, and may actually collaborate with the investigators. Special grants are thus very similar to contracts, but are usually made to non-profit institutions rather than private firms.